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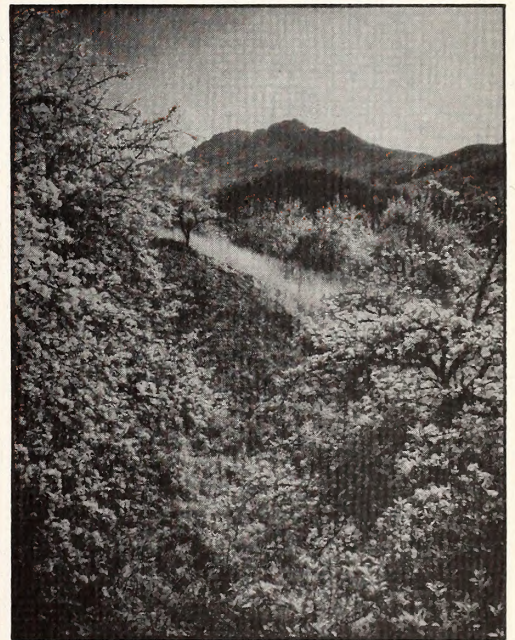
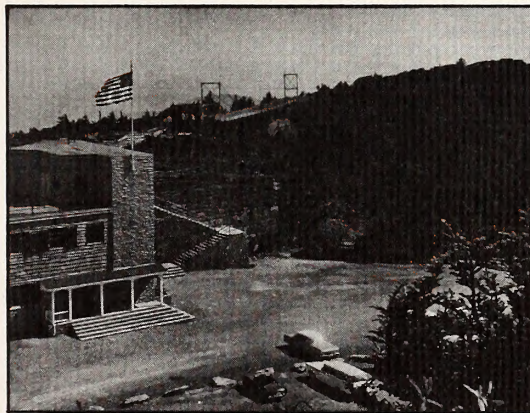


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# ECONOMIC POTENTIAL STUDY AVERY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



## ABSTRACT

TITLE: Avery County Economic Potential Study

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SUBJECT: Analysis of population and economic trends in Avery County, including recommendations for expanding the basic economy of the county.

DATE: April, 1970

LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY: Avery County Planning Board

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ABSTRACT: This publication is divided into three major sections. An analysis of population, economic potential in Avery County.

The population section contains an examination of the change population characteristics in the county from 1910 to 1960. Projection of total population is projected to the year 2000.

The economy section contains an examination of the basic economy of the county. Included in this section are details of education, income and the influence of major employers.

The third section, dealing with economic potential makes recommendations for expanding the three areas of greatest potential -- tourism, industry and agriculture.

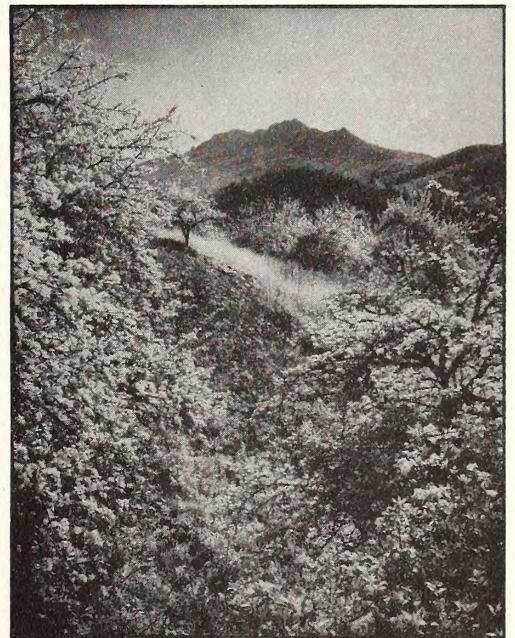
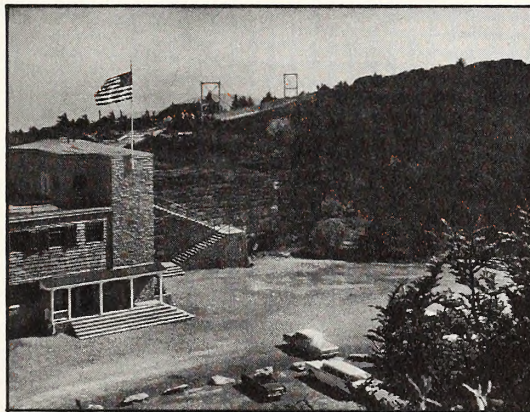
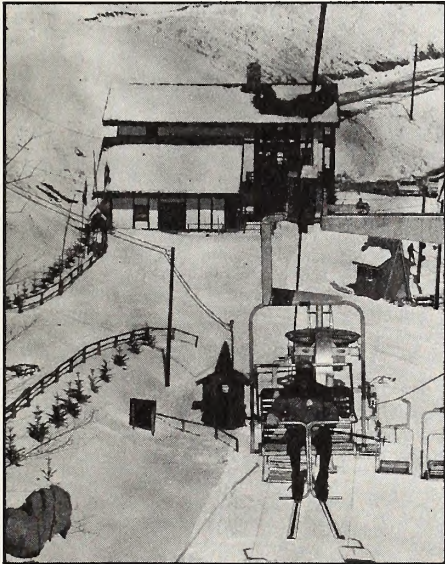












# **ECONOMIC POTENTIAL STUDY AVERY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**



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## INTRODUCTION

An economic base study is essentially a survey of how a county "makes its living." The purpose of such an economic study is to provide government officials, civic organizations, private investors and any other persons interested in the economic growth and potential of the county with the basic information for formulating economic goals and a foundation upon which to base decisions relating to future growth.

In this report, trends will frequently be compared with those of the Western North Carolina Region, counties of similar economic background in close proximity to Avery, the state and nation and sometimes Metropolitan Asheville -- the service center of the region--so that Avery County is placed in a proper perspective for analysis.

Only one community in Avery County has had some form of comprehensive planning. In 1967, a population and economic analysis was completed for Banner Elk as part of its development plan; therefore, no special attempt will be made to analyze it separately. However, the presence -- or lack therefore -- of those factors which constitute a basic for economic growth, such as labor force, unemployment, potential markets for new commodities, will be studied for the county and its centers of population -- Banner Elk, Crossnore, Elk Park, Newland and Linville.

The following text provides the guidelines for social and economic planning in Avery County and as such, is the basis for the land development plan. It also will be closely related to the land potential study since the economy of an area is so dependent upon land capabilities, and in turn, land use is influenced and often dependent upon economic conditions.



## POPULATION

Economic opportunities are created by the presence of people, and in turn, people are attracted to an area by economic opportunities. The most important resource for sound economic growth for any area is its people.

### GENERAL TRENDS

Avery County has experienced an overall population increase of 1,674 persons, or 20.4 percent, for the period 1920 to 1960. Its rate of growth during this time was considerably less than that of the nation (69 percent); the state (78 percent) and the region (48 percent). For each decade from 1920 to 1940, a substantial increase occurred; however, after 1940, the county has declined in population, which is in contrast to the rapid growth trend of the nation. The following table compares Avery County's growth rate with that of adjacent Watauga and Mitchell Counties, the nation, state, and region. Avery and Mitchell Counties showed a population decrease while Watauga experienced an increase mainly due to the presence and expansion of Appalachian State University at Boone.

From 1940 to 1960, the county had a loss of 1,552 persons, or 11.4 percent. Most of this loss occurred between 1950 and 1960 when there was a decrease of 1,343 persons.



TABLE I  
POPULATION GROWTH COMPARISON  
Avery County And Selected Areas  
1950-1965

|                      | <u>1950</u> | <u>1960</u> | <u>1965</u> | <u>% Change</u> |                |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
|                      |             |             |             | <u>1950-60</u>  | <u>1960-65</u> |
| United States (000)  | 151,326     | 179,323     | 194,583     | +18.5           | +8.5           |
| North Carolina (000) | 4,062       | 4,556       | 4,912       | +12.2           | +7.8           |
| WNC Region           | 519,455     | 522,081     | 542,234     | + .5            | +3.9           |
| Watauga County       | 18,342      | 17,529      | 18,560      | - 4.4           | +5.9           |
| Mitchell County      | 15,143      | 13,906      | 12,987      | - 8.2           | -6.6           |
| Avery County         | 13,352      | 12,009      | 12,012      | -10.1           | .02            |

Source: U.S. Census of Population, P-B33-N.C., 1950;  
PC(1)-35C-N.C., 1960.

U.S. Data - Bureau of Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1966.

1965 Data other than U.S. by Dr. C. Horace Hamilton and Eun Sul Lee, N.C. State University.

In spite of this overall population decline in the county, Altamont, Banner Elk, and Linville Townships showed an increase from 1950 to 1960. The townships are located respectively in the extreme south, extreme north and central portions of Avery County, indicating that no certain section of the county grew more rapidly, but rather the towns located in each of these townships received most of the population gain. This is due to better road access, job opportunities, and better land. However, declines in the remainder of the county were large enough to offset their increase. Table 2 shows population by township and municipality for the county from 1910 to 1960.



TABLE 2  
POPULATION BY TOWNSHIP - AVERY COUNTY

1910 - 1960

|                     | <u>1910</u> * | <u>1920</u> | <u>1930</u> | <u>1940</u> | <u>1950</u> | <u>%</u><br><u>Change</u> | <u>1960</u> | <u>%</u><br><u>Change</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Avery Co.           |               | 10,335      | 11,803      | 13,561      | 13,352      | -1.5                      | 12,009      | -10.1                     |
| Altamont Twp.       | 735           | 798         | 1,098       | 1,474       | 1,002       | -32.0                     | 1,120       | 11.8                      |
| Crossnore Town      |               |             | 181         | 266         | 240         | -9.8                      | 277         | 15.4                      |
| Banner Elk Twp.     |               | 910         | 1,078       | 1,295       | 1,341       | 3.6                       | 1,498       | 11.7                      |
| Banner Elk Town     |               | 264         | 340         | 344         | 462         | 34.3                      | 564         | 22.1                      |
| Beech Mtn Twp.      | 846           | 913         | 941         | 968         | 999         | 2.4                       | 756         | -24.3                     |
| Cranberry Twp.      | 2,361         | 2,856       | 2,661       | 2,839       | 2,583       | -9.0                      | 2,186       | -15.4                     |
| Elk Park Town       | 377           | 452         | 488         | 467         | 545         | 16.7                      | 460         | -15.6                     |
| Linville Twp.       | 2,504         | 2,458       | 3,160       | 3,710       | 3,519       | -5.1                      | 3,525       | .2                        |
| Newland Town        |               | 289         | 328         | 471         | 425         | -9.8                      | 564         | 32.7                      |
| Roaring Creek Twp.  | 748           | 735         | 864         | 1,119       | 1,286       | 14.9                      | 899         | -30.1                     |
| Toe River Twp.      | 1,230         | 1,088       | 1,497       | 1,751       | 2,217       | 26.6                      | 1,824       | -17.7                     |
| Wilson's Creek Twp. |               | 577         | 504         | 405         | 405         | 0                         | 201         | -50.1                     |

\* Avery County was organized in 1911; Crossnore was incorporated in 1927.

Townships for which population is shown in 1910 were in Mitchell and Watauga Counties.  
Source: U.S. Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, PC(1)-35B-N.C., 1960

Population of Counties by Minor Civil Division, 1910-1960, N. C. Department of  
Conservation and Development, Division of Community Planning.



## FACTORS INFLUENCING GROWTH

Avery County's loss in population in the last two decades can be partially explained by the recent national trend of rural to urban migration. Avery County, being a predominantly rural, mountain county, has felt the results of this trend strongly, as have most of the other Western North Carolina counties except some of the Upper French Broad counties, namely Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson and Transylvania. According to the 1960 Census, Avery County had no areas classified as urban - 2500 or more population.

According to the Appalachian Regional Commission, the rural counties of the Appalachian Region of North Carolina had an out-migration of 4,400 persons but an overall population increase of 8,707 from 1960 to 1966. In 1960, these rural areas accounted for 22 percent of the N.C. Appalachian Region's population, but by 1966, they had received only 9.7 percent of its population gain. A 1966 estimate for Avery County by the N.C. Department of Administration, Statistical Services Section, gives an outmigration of 908 and a natural increase of 883 for an overall loss of 25 persons since 1960. Table 3 compares Avery's rural population gain with that of the United States.

The medium size urban areas of 10,000 to 50,000 population in the Appalachian Region are shown to have received more than their share of population increase while the large urban areas, with the exception of those in the North Carolina Appalachian area - Winston-Salem and Asheville - received less. This indicates the beginning of transformation of Appalachia from a rural to urban economy which occurred in most of the U. S. decades ago. The lack of coordinated development of resources and services in rural areas contributes to outmigration to the population centers.



TABLE 3  
RURAL SHARE OF POPULATION  
Avery County, Appalachia, U.S.  
1960-1966

|                            | Rural Population                       |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
|                            | % Share of<br>Total Population<br>1960 | % Share of<br>Population Change<br>1960-1966 |
| United States              | 4.7                                    | - 0.4  |
| Appalachia                 | 9.3                                    | 7.1  |
| N.C. Appalachian<br>Region | 22.0                                   | 9.7  |
| Avery County               | 100.0                                  | - 0.2  |

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission, Appalachia Magazine, March, 1960.

N.C. Department of Administration, Statistical Services Section, Estimates of the Population of N.C. Counties for 1966 and 1967, May, 1968.

North Carolina was the only Appalachian state where the rural outmigration was balanced by the metropolitan immigration. This indicates that possibly a number of rural residents are remaining in the region but are moving to the population centers to seek better employment. Avery did not have a population center large enough to be a major attraction.

Another contributing factor in the population decline is the outmigration of the area's younger, better educated and highly skilled workers brought about by the lack of employment opportunities commensurate with their abilities. This has been one of the most serious problems facing the Western North Carolina Region. For Avery County, this loss has been somewhat reduced by a number of retired persons moving in, but this number has not been great enough to offset the large outmigration.



Avery County's population seasonally fluctuates because of the large number of summer residents; however, no data on their influence has been available in the past. Because of Avery's recent development into a winter as well as summer resort area and also its great potential in this field, the resulting expected population increase will be discussed in the "Future Population" section of this report.

#### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to an overall study of the population, it is essential to have some knowledge of such factors as age, sex, and racial composition. Different age groups fluctuate in size and rate of growth; therefore, it is a beneficial planning aid for public officials and others to know these trends in order to anticipate future demands on facilities and services such as schools, parks, etc.

##### Age

From 1950 to 1960, Avery County, as well as the Western North Carolina Region as a whole, lost people in the young and middle aged adult groups -- 45 and under -- while the proportion of people over 45 years of age increased. This was a result of outmigration of the young, better-educated people in order to find better employment and the inmiration of older retired persons. The loss of 1,883 persons in Avery County in the age group 45 and under was greater than the gain of 540 in the 45 and over group, resulting in an overall population loss of 1,343. Table 4 shows a further breakdown by age groups.



TABLE 4  
POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

Avery County  
1950-1960

| Age<br>Category | 1950  |      |        |      | 1960  |      |        |      |
|-----------------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|------|--------|------|
|                 | Male  | %    | Female | %    | Male  | %    | Female | %    |
| 0-4             | 877   | 6.6  | 823    | 6.2  | 540   | 4.5  | 534    | 4.4  |
| 5-14            | 1,637 | 12.3 | 1,558  | 11.7 | 1,411 | 11.8 | 1,311  | 10.9 |
| 15-24           | 1,168 | 8.7  | 1,225  | 9.2  | 1,112 | 9.3  | 1,035  | 8.6  |
| 25-34           | 887   | 6.6  | 862    | 6.5  | 663   | 5.5  | 711    | 5.9  |
| 35-44           | 797   | 6.0  | 741    | 5.5  | 682   | 5.7  | 693    | 5.8  |
| 45-54           | 522   | 3.9  | 567    | 4.2  | 629   | 5.2  | 629    | 5.2  |
| 55-64           | 453   | 3.4  | 414    | 3.1  | 481   | 4.0  | 517    | 4.3  |
| 65+             | 416   | 3.1  | 405    | 3.0  | 521   | 4.3  | 540    | 4.5  |
| TOTAL           | 6,757 | 50.6 | 6,595  | 49.4 | 6,039 | 50.3 | 5,970  | 49.7 |

Source: U.S. Census of Population, P-B33-N.C., 1950;  
PC(1)-35C, 1960.

According to 1966 estimates by the N. C. Department of Administration, Statistical Service Center, from 1960 to 1966, Avery County again lost people in the younger age groups and experienced a substantial increase of 907 persons in the 45 and over group. The most notable decrease was in the 5 to 17 age category with a loss of 805 persons. This came as a result of the decline of agriculture and the ensuing large outmigration of persons of child-bearing age in the late 1940's and 50's whose children would have been in this age group in 1966. There was also a greater number in this group in 1960 than in 1966 as a result of the World War II boom of births.



### Male-Female Population Characteristics

The overall proportion of males to females in Avery County remained practically unchanged from 1950 to 1960. However, it is worthwhile to note Table 4 which shows that in 1950 the 25 to 44 age group contained a greater proportion of males than females, but by 1960, in addition to a large numerical loss, the proportion of females was slightly larger. This could be an indication that the county is not providing satisfactory employment for the young, working males.

### Racial Composition

The only two racial groups that are of any consequential number in Avery County are the whites and blacks. The proportion of blacks in Avery's population is less than that for the Western North Carolina Region and much smaller than that of the state. In 1960, Avery County had a 1.3 percent black population as compared to 6.7 percent for the region and 25.4 percent for the state. There were 151 blacks in Avery in 1960 and 4 persons of other races.

From 1950 to 1960, there was an equal percentage decline of .2 percent in the black proportion of the population in Avery County, the state and the region. The N.C. Planning Information System, State Planning Task Force, gives a 1968 estimate of 116 black persons in Avery County. This represents a decrease of 35 persons in the black population since 1960.

### PRESENT POPULATION

Because natural increase and immigration are beginning to overtake outmigration, it is feasible to assume that Avery County has begun to hold its own against a declining population. Estimates by the N.C. Department of Administration, Statistical Service Center, substantiate this. They give a 1967 estimate of 12,401 persons and a 1968 figure of 12,672 inhabitants. This was an increase of 663 persons or 5.5 percent in 1968 over 1960.



From this trend and from future population projections, a 1969 population estimate of 12,800 permanent residents was derived for Avery County. This represents an increase of 791 persons since 1960 and is believed to be only the beginning of a population increase.

A usually reliable aid in estimating present population is a count of residential electric customers used to obtain a fairly accurate count of households. The census count of persons per household can then be applied to obtain a population figure. In Avery's case, this customer count is subject to seasonal fluctuation and cannot be used to obtain a count of permanent residents; however, it is valuable in estimating the population during the seasons of peak residency. Using this method and a 1960 census count of 3.86 persons per household, an estimate of approximately 16,560 residents was derived for July, 1969.

The summer and early fall months have been and are expected to continue to be Avery's peak season of occupancy. However, with the opening and continued growth of winter sports areas, the population during the winter season is expected to increase.

#### FUTURE POPULATION

Population projections are an integral part of an area's comprehensive plan for the future in that they enable the planning of adequate services and facilities that will not become obsolete by the time they are completed. However, it is important that the nature of such projections be understood. It is difficult to predict the exact number of persons in an area because of the many unforeseen events which could occur; however, with periodic updating, population trends can be established which will remain the soundest approach to future planning.



Predicting future population for Avery County is particularly difficult because of the large fluctuation in the number of residents as a result of part-time occupancy of summer and vacation homes. Another aspect peculiar to resort areas such as Avery County is created by the very nature of these residences. By virtue of their part-time occupancy and their rural, scheduled locations, they do not require a complete range of municipal services such as water, sewerage, schools, etc. Yet, as these people are in Avery for a complete season or more and not merely passing through, they have a tremendous impact on the economy of the area in that they bring in outside money by requiring local business services such as building, plumbing, furniture, groceries, and other retail sales. Therefore, as the tourist population increases, the resident population will grow as a result of increased employment opportunities.

#### Population Projections

Population projections will be presented for Avery County as a whole since the 1969 Avery County Water and Sewerage Study by Henningson, Durham and Richardson Engineers gives projections for municipalities and minor civil divisions. Several projections of Avery's resident population were made but three were chosen for analysis in this report and are given, along with those from the water and sewerage study, on the following table.

The mathematical method of least squares was employed using several base years.<sup>1</sup> The second projection given is the average of all the figures obtained for these different bases.

---

<sup>1</sup> The least squares method is based on past trends and derives the equation of the line that best fits the historic points of known population.



The other projection comes from the N. C. Social Sciences Advisory Committee in co-operation with the U. S. Department of Interior, Office of Business Economics.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 5  
PROJECTIONS OF RESIDENT POPULATION  
Avery County  
1970 - 2000

| Date | Least Squares <sup>2</sup><br>(1920-60 Base) | Least Squares <sup>2</sup><br>(Average) | O.B.E. <sup>3</sup> | Water & <sup>4</sup><br>Sewerage Study |
|------|--|---|---------------------|--|
| 1970 | 13,681                                       | 13,233                                  | 11,139              |  |
| 1980 | 14,171                                       | 13,498                                  | 12,000              | 12,250                                 |
| 1990 | 14,660                                       | 13,763                                  | 13,000              | 14,500                                 |
| 2000 | 15,150                                       | 14,028                                  | 14,000              |  |

<sup>2</sup> N.C. Division of Community Planning.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Business Economics & N.C. Social Sciences Advisory Committee.

<sup>4</sup> Avery County Comprehensive Plan for Water and Sewerage, 1969.  
Henningson, Durham and Richardson Engineers.

<sup>1</sup> The methodology used in the O.B.E. projections is as follows:  
"The compound growth rate of each county from 1950 to 1960 was projected to 1980 and forced by a simple ratio method into equality with the Office of Business Economics 1980 projection for the economic sub-region. One-half of the 1950 to 1960 compound growth rate for each county was then projected to 2020 and the totals again forced into balance with the O.B.E. sub-region projection for 2020 by the same method used for 1980."



All three projections show Avery's population is definitely on the rise, and from all economic indications, it is reasonable to assume that Avery's population can feasibly reach the highest estimate of 15,150 persons by the year 2000. The highest projections--the Least Squares 1920-60 base--are probably most closely related to economic expectations for Avery County, with the exception of the 1970 figure. Both Least Squares projections for 1970 are believed to be too high yet the OBE figure is low. The figure of 14,171 persons in 1980 is also probably high; nevertheless, attainment of the highest figures can be expected for 1990 and 2000.



## ECONOMY

### INTRODUCTION

This section is devoted to the inventory and analysis of Avery County's economic conditions and resources, their past growth, present trends and future potential. Economic indicators such as employment, income, educational attainment, etc., are all interdependent upon each other, and their implications as to the economic well-being of the county will be discussed.

Historically, agriculture has been Avery's basic economic activity but recently more employment opportunities have been available in manufacturing industries-- mostly textiles and apparels. The agricultural segment has also changed with the introduction of new money crops, particularly the shrubbery and ornamental greenery business. The potential for tourism that has always existed in Avery has begun to be realized, and expectations are high that even more economic benefit is to come to the county from this.



## INCOME

A good indicator of an area's standard of living and degree of economic development is its level of income. Economic and employment opportunities determine incomes and incomes provide the purchasing power to maintain a standard of living. Personal and family incomes have risen greatly in the United States in the last twenty years, resulting in the highest standard of living of all times. A look at the distribution of family and personal incomes will give an indication of how Avery County shares in this prosperity.

Table 6 compares the percentage distribution of families in different income ranges in Avery County with the state, nation, region and Metropolitan Asheville and shows how this distribution has changed from 1949 to 1959. In 1959, Avery's 72.0 percent of families earning under \$4,000 was much greater than any of the above-mentioned areas. Approximately 40 percent of families in the United States earn less than \$4,000 and about 50 percent do so in the state. Of these families earning less than \$4,000 in Avery, 1,612 or 57.9 percent earned less than \$3,000, and 594 families or 21.3 percent had an annual income of \$1,000 or less.

Avery had a smaller percentage of families in the \$4,000 to \$6,999 income range in 1959 than the other areas and a smaller percentage in the categories over \$7,000. This again indicates that Avery's income level is not as high as the region, state and nation; however, its improvement from 1949 to 1959 in the \$4,000 to \$6,999 category has been greater than the nation, state and Metropolitan Asheville but slightly less than the region. Improvement in the percentage earning over \$7,000 was less than all the comparison areas.

However, poor this may appear, the majority of Avery's families below the poverty line produce a great deal of their own food and therefore do not suffer as much as it may appear.



Data was not available for townships in 1949, but 1959 figures showed that there was some variation of income distribution within different areas of the county. Avery's median family income (half the families earn less, half earn more) has more than doubled from 1949 to 1959; nevertheless, it was less than half that of the U.S. in 1959.



TABLE 6  
FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION  
Avery County and Selected Areas  
1949 & 1959

|                        | % Under<br>\$4,000<br><u>1949</u> <u>1959</u> | % \$4,000-<br>\$6,999<br><u>1949</u> <u>1959</u> | % \$7,000-<br>\$9,999<br><u>1949</u> <u>1959</u> | %10,000<br>& over<br><u>1949</u> <u>1959</u> | Median<br>Family Income<br><u>1949</u> <u>1959</u> |
|------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| United States          | 68.3 39.6                                     | 24.0 31.3  | 4.9 17.0   | 2.8 12.1                                     | N.A. 5,660   |
| North Carolina         | 81.2 50.6                                     | 14.7 30.2  | 2.4 12.3   | 1.7 6.9                                      | 1,864 3,956  |
| Metropolitan Asheville | 76.7 44.7                                     | 18.5 32.7  | 2.9 14.1   | 1.9 8.5                                      | 2,251 4,419  |
| Western North Carolina | 85.7 54.7                                     | 11.5 28.6  | 1.8 10.8   | 1.0 5.7                                      | 1,387 3,108  |
| Avery County           | 96.2 72.0                                     | 3.0 19.2   | .5 6.2   | .3 2.6                                       | 1,093 2,569  |
| Altamont Twp.*         | 79.8  | 9.9  | 7.4  | 2.9  | 2,935  |
| Banner Elk Twp.        | 75.4  | 22.6   | 2.0  | 0  | 1,975  |
| Beech Mt. Twp.         | 78.1  | 14.2   | 3.5  | 4.2  | N.A.   |
| Cranberry Twp.         | 67.6  | 21.9   | 8.3  | 2.2  | 2,523  |
| Linville Twp.          | 77.7  | 16.7   | 3.7  | 1.9  | 2,641  |
| Roaring Creek Twp.     | 68.6  | 22.3   | 6.1  | 3.0  | 1,853  |
| Toe River Twp.         | 60.5  | 39.5   | 0  | 0  | 3,020  |
| Wilsons Creek Twp.     | 77.5  | 18.1   | 2.8  | 1.6  | N.A.   |

\* Note: Data not available by township for 1949.

Source: U.S. Census of Population, P-C33-N.C., 1950; PC(1)-35C-N.C., 1960.

U.S. Census of Population, Unpublished Reports, PH-3, 1960.



Per capita income is that figure obtained by dividing the total personal income of an area by the total number of inhabitants. In 1966, Avery's per capita income at \$1,416 was \$861 less than, or 62.2 percent of the state's and \$370 less than that of the region.

TABLE 7  
PER CAPITA INCOME  
Avery County, North Carolina and  
Western North Carolina  
1947 - 1966

|         | <u>Avery Co.</u> | <u>N.C.</u> | <u>W.N.C.</u> | <u>Avery Co.<br/>as % of State</u> |
|---------|------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1947    | \$378            | \$894       | \$594         | 42.3                               |
| Rank*   | 99               |             |               |                                    |
| 1954    | \$445            | \$1,190     | \$777         | 37.4                               |
| Rank    | 100              |             |               |                                    |
| %Change | 17.7             | 33.1        | 30.8          |                                    |
| 1958    | \$536            | \$1,420     | 1,004         | 37.7                               |
| Rank    | 100              |             |               |                                    |
| %Change | 20.4             | 19.3        | 29.2          |                                    |
| 1962    | \$949            | \$1,732     | 1,289         | 54.8                               |
| Rank    | 97               |             |               |                                    |
| %Change | 77.1             | 22.0        | 28.4          |                                    |
| 1966    | \$1,416          | \$2,277     | 1,786         | 62.2                               |
| Rank    | 84               |             |               |                                    |
| %Change | 49.2             | 31.5        | 38.6          |                                    |

\* Rank from top of 100 counties in N.C.

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, N.C. Work Force Estimates by County, Area and State, August, 1968.



Table 7 shows that per capita income in Avery County is behind that of the state and region but that if trends of the 60's continue, the gap is being narrowed. Avery's per capita income increased more than \$1,000 from 1947 to 1966. From 1962 to 1966 alone, this figure increased almost 50 percent in Avery as compared to 32 percent for the state and 39 percent for the region. In 1947, Avery ranked 2nd poorest among North Carolina's one hundred counties, while in 1966 it had risen to 16th from the bottom.

### EDUCATION

The level of educational attainment is related closely to an individual's earning power and income. Jobs for the uneducated and unskilled are over decreasing, while the better educated command higher wages. The educational attainment of Avery County's populace 25 years of age and older in 1960 is compared with that of the state and region on Table 8.

Avery's 1.7 percent of persons with no school years completed is lower than the state's 3.1 percent or the region's 2.7 percent. Avery County showed great improvement in this category since 1950 when percentage decrease from 1950 to 1960 was 72.1 percent as compared to 44.5 percent for the state.

At 8.2 years, Avery County's median years of school completed in 1960 was only slightly less than the region at 8.3 and the state at 9.8, but substantially less than the United States at 10.7. In respect to the townships, Altamont had the highest median years of school completed at 9.9, Banner Elk Township had the highest percentage completing one or more years of college at 16.3 percent, and Linville Township had the lowest percentage -- at .5 percent -- of those with no school completed.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PERSONS  
25 YEARS OLD AND OVER  
Avery County & Townships, North Carolina  
Western North Carolina  
1960

|                    | % NO<br>SCHOOL<br>COMPLETED | %<br>1-8<br>YEARS | %<br>1-3 YRS.<br>HIGH SCH. | %<br>4 YRS<br>HIGH SCH. | % 1-4 YRS.<br>COLLEGE<br>OR MORE | MEDIAN SCHOOL<br>YEARS COMPLETED |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| North Carolina     | 3.1                         | 47.6              | 17.0                       | 18.9                    | 13.4                             | 8.9                              |
| W.N.C.             | 2.7                         | 50.5              | 16.2                       | 18.4                    | 12.2                             | 8.3                              |
| Avery County       | 1.7                         | 59.1              | 15.3                       | 14.3                    | 9.6                              | 8.2                              |
| Altamont Twp.      | 1.7                         | 43.6              | 15.6                       | 23.3                    | 15.8                             | 9.9                              |
| Banner Elk Twp.    | 3.7                         | 50.8              | 10.1                       | 19.1                    | 16.3                             | 8.6                              |
| Beech Mt. Twp.     | 1.2                         | 70.4              | 14.2                       | 8.3                     | 5.9                              | 7.8                              |
| Cranberry Twp.     | 2.5                         | 64.3              | 17.0                       | 10.1                    | 6.1                              | 7.6                              |
| Linville Twp.      | .5                          | 55.0              | 16.8                       | 15.6                    | 12.1                             | 8.5                              |
| Roaring Creek Twp. | 1.7                         | 61.3              | 13.9                       | 17.2                    | 5.9                              | 8.1                              |
| Toe River Twp.     | 1.7                         | 65.7              | 14.5                       | 11.5                    | 6.6                              | 7.8                              |
| Wilsons Creek Twp. | 3.7                         | 67.9              | 14.8                       | 9.9                     | 3.7                              | 7.3                              |

Source: U. S. Census of Population, )C(1)-35C-N.C., 1960.  
U. S. Census of Population, Unpublished Reports, PH-3, 1960.



Although Avery County's residents have easy access to institutions of higher education at Banner Elk and Boone, the percentage of those in Avery completing one or more years of college was less than the state and region in 1960. However, this does not necessarily mean that Avery's high school graduates are not seeking higher education. Since this is a count of residents 25 years old and over and since 40.6 percent of Avery's high school graduates-- which is very close to that of the state and region-- entered institutions of higher education in 1959, it is likely that the better educated left the county to seek better employment.

From 1959 to 1967, the state and region experienced a large increase in the number of high school graduates entering technical schools. Avery did not show such an increase, with less than one percent change. This can be explained by the absence of such an area-oriented institution and the type of local industry that demands high levels of technical skill, thus leaving more persons with no technical or skilled training to enter the labor force. Such was the case in 1967 when 38.2 percent of high school graduates in Avery were employed as compared to 31.6 percent for the region and 30.9 percent for the state. Therefore, leaving the county has been the only alternative for those high school graduates who sought better employment through a technical education.

Table 8 shows that the percentage of persons who completed only 1 to 8 years of school was greater in Avery than in the state or region, and a smaller percentage completed additional years in high school and college. This indicates that Avery has a drop-out rate higher than the state or region.

The following table compares Avery's drop-out rate with that of adjoining counties, Buncombe County, the state and region. With 51.8 percent of the fifth-grade enrollment in 1959 graduating eight years later, Avery County was below all the comparison areas. Avery ranks 87th among North Carolina's one hundred counties in this respect.



TABLE 9  
SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATES  
Avery County & Selected Areas  
1967

|                | Fifth Grade<br>Enrollment<br>1959-60 | 1967<br>Graduates | %<br>Graduating | Rank From Top<br>in State's<br>100 Counties |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---|
| North Carolina | 104,634                              | 65,009            | 62.1            |   |
| W.N.C.         | 11,923                               | 7,474             | 62.7            |   |
| Buncombe Co.   | 2,621                                | 1,875             | 71.5            | 5   |
| Mitchell Co.   | 362                                  | 205               | 56.6            | 69  |
| Watauga Co.    | 385                                  | 262               | 68.1            | 15  |
| Avery Co.      | 328                                  | 170               | 51.8            | 87  |

Source: N.C. Department of Public Instruction, Profile of Significant Factors in Education in North Carolina, 1968.

#### LABOR FORCE

The United States Bureau of the Census defines the labor force as those persons 14 years old and over who are employed or who are actively seeking work.



TABLE 10  
ANNUAL AVERAGE LABOR FORCE  
Avery County  
1963 - 1968

|                      | <u>1963</u> | <u>1965</u> | <u>1967</u> | <u>1968</u> | CHANGE 1963-68<br><u>No.</u> <u>%</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 3,075       | 3,365       | 3,640       | 3,750       | 675      22.0                         |
| Total Employed       | 2,795       | 3,155       | 3,490       | 3,590       | 795      28.4                         |
| Total Unemployed     | 280         | 210         | 150         | 160         | 120      -42.9                        |
| Rate of Unemployment | 9.1         | 6.2         | 4.1         | 4.3         | -4.8      -52.7                       |

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, N.C. Work Force Estimates by County, Area and State, August, 1969.

Note: Data is by place of work.

Table 10 above gives the number of persons in Avery's labor force and shows how it has changed from 1963 to 1968. Table 15 on page 30 gives a further breakdown by industry. The total civilian labor force increased by 675 persons during this period. The percentage increase of 22 percent was better than the state's 12.6 percent growth. This came mainly as a result of the expanded apparel industry.

#### Worker Mobility

The modern-day worker does not hesitate to commute to areas outside his home town or county if suitable employment is available. Table 11 shows that 19.6 percent of Avery County's resident workers went outside the county to work in 1960. These 680 out-commuters outnumbered the 118 who came from other counties to work in Avery for a net loss of 562 workers. The number of workers who commuted into the county was 4.2 percent of the total county employment.



TABLE 11  
COMMUTING PATTERNS  
Avery County

1960

| Mobility Pattern           | Went out of<br>County to Work | Came into County<br>To Work |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ashe County                | 8                             | -                           |
| Buncombe County            | 27                            | -                           |
| Burke County               | 71                            | 7                           |
| Caldwell County            | 31                            | -                           |
| Carter County, Tenn.       | 28                            | 28                          |
| McDowell County            | 82                            | 9                           |
| Mitchell County            | 187                           | 46                          |
| Watauga County             | 39                            | 24                          |
| Yancey County              | -                             | 4                           |
| Elsewhere                  | <u>207</u>                    | <u>-</u>                    |
| Totals:      Out-Commuting | 680                           | In-commuting 118            |

Net loss of 562 workers.

Source: N.C. Department of Conservation and Development,  
Commuting Patterns in North Carolina, 1960.

The commuting patterns also reveal that Avery's labor force is not trained in a very wide range of diversified job skills since most of those out-commuting go to areas which employ workers with similar skills. Mitchell, McDowell and Burke Counties received the largest numbers of the out-commuters. These counties have textile industries and also furniture manufacturers. These people must be considered as recruitable labor if the proper job opportunities were to exist in Avery County.

#### Recruitable Labor

In Avery County, there is a reserve supply of available workers for new and expanding industry. Table 12 gives the estimated number of resident workers who would be available for production jobs for Avery County and its surrounding labor market.



TABLE 12  
ESTIMATED RECRUITABLE LABOR  
FOR PRODUCTION JOBS  
Avery and Neighboring Counties  
June, 1969

| County   | Type of Worker                    |        |                               |        |   |        | TOTAL |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|---|--------|-------|
|          | Experienced Manufacturing Workers |        | All Other Experienced Workers |        | Inexperienced but Referable and Trainable |        |       |
|          | Male                              | Female | Male                          | Female | Male                                      | Female |       |
| Avery    | 15                                | 15     | 15                            | 10     | 25  | 25     | 105   |
| Mitchell | 15                                | 15     | 25                            | 20     | 25  | 25     | 125   |
| Yancey   | 15                                | 15     | 25                            | 15     | 25  | 25     | 120   |
| Watauga  | 45                                | 45     | 75                            | 50     | 75  | 125    | 415   |
| Caldwell | 20                                | 50     | 15                            | 30     | 15  | 260    | 390   |
| Burke    | 0                                 | 0      | 0                             | 0      | 100                                       | 200    | 300   |
| McDowell | 60                                | 325    | 105                           | 185    | 100                                       | 350    | 1,125 |
| TOTAL    | 170                               | 465    | 260                           | 310    | 365                                       | 1,010  | 2,580 |

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, Bureau of Employment Security Research, June, 1969.



These figures include those currently unemployed, the underemployed who are holding jobs that do not utilize their full potentials, and potential jobseekers, such as housewives, workers who commute to other areas but would prefer local employment, agricultural workers interested in industrial jobs. Within Avery County in June, 1969, there were 15 males and 15 females who already possessed experience in manufacturing production work, 15 males and 10 females experienced in work other than manufacturing, and 25 males and 25 females inexperienced by adaptable and trainable for manufacturing jobs. This gives a total of 105 persons who would accept industrial employment if the right wages and job offers arose - 55 males and 50 females.

In the six counties neighboring Avery, there exists 2,475 potential recruitable workers - 740 males and 1,735 females. Of course, all of these people cannot be induced to work in Avery County but they must be considered as potential labor force if the proper opportunities were to exist.

#### Unemployment

Avery County as well as the Western North Carolina Region as a whole has historically suffered from unemployment. However, as shown by Table 13, Avery has experienced steady improvement from 1962 to 1968 with a change in the unemployment rate from 10.4 percent to 4.3 percent. These figures represent all persons who did not work but were able, available and looking for work. This was lower than the region in 1968 but above North Carolina at 3.2 percent and the nation at 3.6 percent. Currently, Avery is not classified as a labor surplus area by the N.C. Employment Security Commission.



TABLE 13  
RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT  
Avery County & Selected Areas  
1962-1968

|                | 1962 | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Avery Co.      | 10.4 | 9.1  | 8.5  | 6.2  | 4.0  | 4.1  | 4.3  |
| Watauga County | 6.6  | 6.6  | 6.0  | 5.0  | 4.3  | 4.7  | 3.6  |
| W.N.C. Region  | 10.1 | 9.8  | 8.4  | 6.6  | 5.4  | 5.9  | 5.4  |
| North Carolina | 3.8  | 3.7  | 4.8  | 4.2  | 3.2  | 3.4  | 3.2  |
| United States  | 5.6  | 5.7  | 5.2  | 4.6  | 3.8  | 3.8  | 3.6  |

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, N.C. Work Force Estimates by County Area, and State, August, 1969;  
and U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Earnings,  
July, 1969.

#### Underemployment

Underemployment results from a lack of job opportunities equal to the skill levels of the work force and from seasonal fluctuation. Table 14 above shows employment by quarter for Avery in 1968. Agricultural employment showed the greatest fluctuation with a difference of 420 workers from the first to third quarters. Manufacturing remained stable as did most other sectors except service where more persons were employed in the spring and summer quarters as a result of the tourist season.



TABLE 14  
LABOR FORCE BY QUARTER

Avery County

1968

|                               | First<br>Quarter | Second<br>Quarter | Third<br>Quarter | Fourth<br>Quarter | Annual<br>Average |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Civilian Work Force           | 3,420            | 2,770             | 4,100            | 3,710             | 3,750             |
| Unemployment, Total           | 230              | 150               | 140              | 120               | 160               |
| Rate of Unemployment          | 6.7              | 4.0               | 3.4              | 3.2               | 4.3               |
| Employment, Total             | 3,190            | 3,620             | 3,960            | 3,590             | 3,590             |
| Manufacturing                 | 860              | 880               | 890              | 920               | 890               |
| Construction                  | 40               | 50                | 70               | 100               | 60                |
| Transp., Comm., &<br>P. Util. | 60               | 60                | 60               | 60                | 60                |
| Trade                         | 220              | 230               | 260              | 300               | 250               |
| Fin., Inc., & R. Estate       | 40               | 50                | 50               | 50                | 50                |
| Service                       | 550              | 680               | 730              | 610               | 640               |
| Government                    | 400              | 400               | 390              | 420               | 400               |
| Other NonMfg.                 | 120              | 130               | 120              | 120               | 120               |
| Agriculture Employment        | 380              | 560               | 800              | 440               | 550               |
| All Other Employment*         | 520              | 580               | 590              | 570               | 570               |

\* Includes Nonagricultural self-employed, Unpaid Family and Domestic Workers.

Source: N.C. Employment Security Commission, N.C. Work Force Estimates By County, Area and State, August, 1968.

EMPLOYMENT

The economic growth of an area is determined by its ability to provide employment opportunities for its residents as well as to attract new people from outside.



## Employment By Industry

Basically, all types of employment can be divided into two major categories-- local and export. Those industries which distribute their products and services outside the local area belong to the export sector and are known as "basic" industries because they bring in outside money. In a well-balanced economy, these basic industries create a need for services or the "non-basic" sector which serve to circulate existing money in the local area but, nevertheless, create many jobs.

Manufacturing, agriculture and the tourist industry are considered to be the principal sources of basic employment in Avery County. All others are primarily "non-basic"; however, parts of their goods and services are sold to non-residents and bring in some outside money. Therefore, for purposes of analyzing the types of employment in Avery County, Table 15 gives employment for major industry groups.

The figures given are compiled by the N.C. Employment Security Commission and are given by place of work rather than place of residence as in the U.S. Census; therefore, the numbers employed represent all those who work in Avery County, resident and non-resident. This type of count shows the relative importance of different industry types to the area, whereas a resident employment count gives more information about the labor force.

In 1968, manufacturing-- a "basic" industry -- comprised approximately 25 percent of the county's employment. From 1963 to 1968, manufacturing employment increased 102.3 percent. Agriculture sustained about 15 percent of the persons employed in the county in 1968, but since 1963, agricultural employment declined 36 percent. These two basic industries account for 40 percent of the county's total employment, although some of their products are consumed locally. It is not known exactly how much outside money is brought in by other non-manufacturing industries, but since Avery has a large tourist industry, it is reasonable to assume that the service, trade and construction industries



bring in outside money as well as serve local needs.

The construction industry has shown a tremendous growth between 1963 and 1968, with an increase of 20 employees or 200 percent. Most of this increase came between 1967 and 1968 as a result of expanding building activities in the tourist industry. Trade had an additional 70 persons employed during this period and service provided 200 additional jobs. Manufacturing showed an increase of 450 employees. The only two industries showing a decrease in employment were agriculture with a loss of 310 workers and transportation, communication and public utilities with a loss of 10 persons.



TABLE 15

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

## Avery County

1963, 1965, 1967, 1968

|   | 1963  | 1965  | 1967  | 1968  | Distribution<br>%<br>1968 | Change<br>No. | 1963-68<br>% |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Total Employment                                  | 2,795 | 3,155 | 3,490 | 3,590 | 100.0                     | 795           | 28.4         |
| Manufacturing                                     | 440   | 700   | 850   | 890   | 24.8                      | 450           | 102.3        |
| Textile & Apparel                                 | 270   | 500   | 675   |       |                           |               |              |
| Lumber & Wood                                     | 50    | 45    | 20    |       |                           |               |              |
| Printing, Stone,<br>Clay & Glass                  | 120   | 155   | 155   |       |                           |               |              |
| Non-Manufacturing                                 | 1,090 | 1,250 | 1,480 | 1,580 | 44.0                      | 490           | 45.0         |
| Construction                                      | 20    | 30    | 30    | 60    | 1.7                       | 40            | 200.0        |
| Transportation, &<br>Communication &<br>Utilities | 70    | 70    | 70    | 60    | 1.7                       | -10           | -14.3        |
| Trade   | 180   | 190   | 240   | 250   | 7.0                       | 70            | 38.9         |
| Finance, Real Est.,<br>& Insurance                | 40    | 20    | 50    | 50    | 1.4                       | 10            | 25.0         |
| Service   | 440   | 520   | 590   | 640   | 17.8                      | 200           | 45.5         |
| Government  | 330   | 350   | 380   |       |                           |               |              |
| Other Non-Mfg.                                    | 10    | 70    | 120   | 120   | 3.3                       | 110           | 1100.0       |
| Agriculture                                       | 860   | 680   | 600   | 550   | 15.3                      | -310          | -36.0        |
| All Other <sup>1</sup>                            | 405   | 525   | 560   | 570   | 15.9                      | 165           | 40.7         |

<sup>1</sup> Includes non-agricultural self-employed, unpaid family & domestic workers.

Note: N. C. Employment Security Commission figures represent the number of people who work in Avery County, both residents and non-residents.

Source: N. C. Employment Security Commission, N. C. Work Force Estimates by County, Area and State, August, 1969.



## Manufacturing Employment

Manufacturing employment in Avery County has more than doubled from 1962 to 1967. In 1967, manufacturing comprised 25 percent of all jobs in the county. Table 16 shows a breakdown by industry-- again, the figures compiled by the N. C. Employment Security Commission by place of work, include all jobs within the county boundaries.

TABLE 16  
MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT

Avery County

1962-1967

|                                      | 1962 | 1964 | 1966 | 1967 | Change 1962-67 |       |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------------|-------|
|                                      |      |      |      |      | No.            | %     |
| Manufacturing                        | 420  | 600  | 800  | 850  | 430            | 102.4 |
| Textile &<br>Apparel                 | 240  | 420  | 625  | 675  | 435            | 181.3 |
| Lumber &<br>Wood                     | 50   | 50   | 10   | 20   | -30            | -60.0 |
| Printing &<br>Stone, Clay<br>& Glass | 130  | 130  | 165  | 155  | 25             | 19.2  |

Source: N. C. Employment Security Commission, Bureau of Employment Security Research.

Note: Because of the small number of manufacturing firms in the county, categories could not be broken down further for reason of revealing classified employment data on individual firms.

The major portion of the increase in manufacturing was in the textiles and apparels sector, in fact, there was a larger numerical increase than in total manufacturing employment which included a decrease in the lumber and wood sector. Textiles and apparels showed an increase of 435 workers or 181 percent from 1962 to 1967. According to the N.C. Employment Security Commission, most of this gain has been in apparels since 1964.



The textiles and apparel industries are the nation's lowest paying with the smallest wage growth rates in manufacturing. They employ mostly females and rank third and first respectively in the nation in the proportion of production workers to total employed.

These industries employ persons with below average education and skills and seek areas with low wage scales and a surplus of labor. Therefore, they do not provide substantial employment opportunities for males and for the better educated and highly skilled; therefore, they do not prevent or discourage out-migration of male workers. However, they do provide work for females thus enabling low-income families to increase their total incomes.

#### Manufacturing Wages

The N. C. Employment Security Commission reports that the average weekly wage for manufacturing employment covered by compensation insurance for Avery County in 1968 was \$74.16 while that for the state was \$106.37. From 1963 to 1968, this wage increased only 12.7 percent in Avery as opposed to 32.4 percent for the state. This is a result of the low paying textile and apparel industries being the predominant employer.

### AGRICULTURE

Basically, the trends in agriculture are the same in the nation, state, region and Avery County -- reduction in the number of farms, total acreage in farms, and employment in agriculture. Scientific technology has increased the productivity of farms faster than the demand for food and farm products, thus farms have become larger, more mechanized, and more productive.

The total acreage in farms in Avery County decreased 37.7 percent from 1954 to 1964, and the total number of farms decreased from 1,503 to 734. This shows that there was farm consolidation which is supported by the fact that the size of farms increased during this same time.



The average farm size in Avery was approximately 72 acres in 1964, which is typical of a regional, mountain farm. The farm size in Avery as well as the region can never reach national proportions because of the mountainous terrain. These small farms are best suited for commercial crops and livestock raising.

Avery County had a total of 301 commercial farms in 1964. Table 17 gives a breakdown of the number of commercial farms according to value of products sold. The largest number, 210 farms, sold less than \$2,500 in products. From 1954 to 1964, there was a loss in the number of farms in all classifications except part-time and in classes I and II. This shows that most small farmers must have some other source of income. The number of part-time farmers increased 30 percent from 1954 to 1964 due to new industries within the region.

The value of farm land and buildings on that land has greatly increased since 1954. The average value per farm in Avery was \$4,761 in 1954 and in 1964, \$16,579, an increase of 248 percent. The amount of cropland harvested decreased by 67 percent from 1954 to 1964, while the value of all farm products sold increased by 27 percent, showing increased productivity per acre.

Table 18 shows that the value of crops sold increased from 1954 to 1964 but that livestock and poultry production declined. The greatest increase in products sold was in the forest and horticultural specialty crops with a gain of \$566,846 or 330 percent. The nursery business, the growing of ornamentals, christmas trees and shrubs has profited much in Avery and is expected to continue to do so in the future. It has ideal conditions to grow such products in their natural habitat.



TABLE 17  
SIZE, VALUE, AND ECONOMIC CLASS OF FARMS

Avery County  
1954, 1959, 1964

|  | 1954    | 1959    | 1964    | Change 1954-64<br>No. | %     |
|--|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------|-------|
| Number of Farms                                      | 1,503   | 819     | 734     | -769                  | -51.2 |
| Acres in Farms                                       | 84,432  | 56,822  | 52,604  | -31,828               | -37.7 |
| Average size of<br>Farms (acres)                     | 56.0    | 69.4    | 71.7    | 15.7                  | 28.0  |
| Cropland Harvested<br>(acres)                        | 12,318  | 8,003   |         |                       |       |
| Value of Land and<br>Buildings per farm              | 4,761   | 9,938   | 16,579  | 11,818                | 248.2 |
| Farms by Economic<br>Class:                          |         |         |         |                       |       |
| Commercial Farms <sup>1</sup>                        | 448     | 204     | 301     | -147                  | -32.8 |
| Class I (\$40,000<br>& over)                         | ---     | 6       | 6       | ----                  | ----- |
| Class II (\$20,000-<br>& 39,999)                     | 2       | 2       | 3       | 1                     | 50.0  |
| Class III (\$10,000-<br>\$19,999)                    | 26      | --      | 12      | -14                   | -53.8 |
| Class IV (\$5,000-<br>\$9,999)                       | 65      | 31      | 17      | -47                   | -73.8 |
| Class V (\$2,500-<br>\$4,999)                        | 85      | 25      | 53      | -32                   | -37.6 |
| Class VI (\$50-<br>\$2,499)                          | 270     | 140     | 210     | -60                   | -22.2 |
| Other Farms  | 1,055   | 615     | 433     | -622                  | -59.0 |
| Part-Time  | 230     | 400     | 276     | 46                    | 20.0  |
| Part-Retirement                                      | 825     | 215     | 157     | -668                  | -81.0 |
| Value of All Farm<br>Products Sold (in<br>thousands) | 1,052.7 | 1,286.5 | 1,347.9 | 295.2                 | 27.1  |
| All Crops  | 736.5   | 879.2   | 1,313.6 | 577.1                 | 78.4  |
| Vegetables &<br>Field crops                          | 564.6   | 497.8   | 574.8   | 10.2                  | 1.8   |
| Forest & Horticultural<br>Specialty Crops            | 171.9   | 381.4   | 738.7   | 566.8                 | 329.8 |
| All Livestock & live-<br>stock products              | 316.2   | 407.3   | 291.9   | -24.3                 | -7.7  |
| Dairy Products                                       | 81.9    | 104.0   | 38.6    | -43.3                 | -52.8 |
| Poultry Products                                     | 47.5    | 17.0    | 15.7    | -31.8                 | -67.0 |

<sup>1</sup> Commercial Farms are classified by value of farm products sold.  
Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, N.C., 1954, 1959, 1964.



## Farm Income

The following table presents the distribution of farm families in Avery County by amount of income from all sources.

TABLE 18  
Avery County Farm Income  
1960

| INCOME             | FAMILIES |      |
|--------------------|----------|------|
|                    | No.      | %    |
| Under \$4,000      | 497      | 74.2 |
| \$4,000 - \$6,999  | 134      | 20.0 |
| \$7,000 - \$9,999  | 20       | 3.0  |
| \$10,000 & over    | 19       | 2.8  |
| Median Farm Income | \$2,171  |      |

Source: U. S. Census of Population, PC-1-35C-N.C., 1960.

Avery's median farm income at \$2,171 in 1960 was only 85 percent of the total median income for the county. With the county's income lower than the state and much lower than the nation, needless to say agricultural income was very poor. However, with increased productivity and sales, as shown by Table 17, it is reasonable to assume that farm incomes have improved since 1960. Although agriculture is still the largest source of income in Avery, these figures do not reveal the complete picture of farm families' welfare since farming has become a second income source with other jobs providing the main income for many people. This is especially true for crops such as shrubs and ornamentals which do not require full time care. Also, the income figures do not take into consideration the products grown and consumed on the farm.



## SERVICE

The service sector of the economy is generally regarded as dependent upon the basic sector-- in Avery County, manufacturing and agriculture. New jobs in these major sectors create needs for services, thus employment for many people. In Avery County, the services that are dependent upon the tourist trade-- hotels and motels, recreation, entertainment, and personal services-- must keep close pace with or even precede tourism growth.

### Trade

The trade sector of the economy is composed of two activities-- wholesale and retail sales. In discussing these factors in Avery County, it must be remembered that Metropolitan Asheville is the trade center of Western North Carolina and the variety of specialty items which it presents is difficult with which to compete. Avery's close proximity to Tennessee trade centers such as Johnson City also limits its ultimate potential in this area.

### Retail Trade

Table 19 compares trends in the retail sector in Avery with the region and state. The retail sector includes such establishments as food stores, automotive dealers, hardware and building suppliers, eating and drinking places, furniture and appliance stores.

Avery County experienced an increase of \$1,189,000 in retail sales from 1958 to 1963. This represents approximately 35 percent increase, which was better than the state's 30 percent but slightly below the region's 39 percent. This larger increase in Western North Carolina was the result of incomes in the region catching up with the state. In 1963, the county had 102 retail sales establishments, an increase of 12 percent over 1958. In 1963, payrolls amounted to \$332,000 in the county and held an amazing 75 percent increase over 1958 as compared to the state's 35 percent and the region's 34 percent, but still the average wage per employee was slightly less in Avery County. This could be a result of seasonal employment in the county.



TABLE 19  
TRENDS IN RETAIL TRADES  
Avery County, W.N.C., N.C.  
1958-1963

| AVERY COUNTY                         | 1958   | 1963   | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 91     | 102    | 12.1     |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 3,444  | 4,633  | 34.5     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 189    | 332    | 75.7     |
| No. of Employees                     | 98     | 120    | 22.4     |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 1,929  | 2,767  | 43.4     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 37,846 | 45,422 | 27.9     |

| W.N.C. REGION                        | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 4,752   | 5,143   | 8.2      |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 381,015 | 527,914 | 38.6     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 37,445  | 49,990  | 33.5     |
| No. of Employees                     | 16,265  | 17,263  | 4.1      |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 2,302   | 2,896   | 25.8     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 80,180  | 102,647 | 28.0     |

| NORTH CAROLINA                       | 1958      | 1963      | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 41,296    | 43,857    | 6.2      |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 3,837,052 | 4,975,282 | 29.7     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 374,510   | 504,777   | 34.8     |
| No. of Employees                     | 159,745   | 169,698   | 6.2      |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 2,344     | 2,975     | 26.9     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 92,916    | 113,443   | 22.1     |

Source: U. S. Census of Business, Retail Trade, 1958 and 1963.



TABLE 20  
TOTAL RETAIL SALES  
Avery County & Selected Areas  
1966-1968

|              | 1966      | 1967      | % Change<br>1966-67 | 1968      | % Change<br>1967-68 | % Change<br>1966-68 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Avery Co.    | \$8,500   | 9,300     | 8.6                 | 9,900     | 6.8                 | 6.0                 |
| Mitchell Co. | 17,300    | 18,000    | 3.9                 | 19,300    | 7.4                 | 1.6                 |
| Watauga Co.  | 29,300    | 31,300    | 7.0                 | 34,700    | 10.8                | 8.6                 |
| W.N.C.       | 799,300   | 847,200   | 6.0                 | 894,800   | 5.6                 | 1.9                 |
| N.C.         | 8,548,500 | 9,126,300 | 6.8                 | 9,780,600 | 7.2                 | 4.4                 |

(\*in thousands)

Source: N. C. Department of Tax Research. Statistics on Taxation, 1968.

Table 20 gives total sales data for Avery and neighboring counties, the state and region as compiled by the N.C. Department of Tax Research. These figures are not entirely comparable with those given previously by the U.S. Census of Business; however, they are useful in showing recent changes in the county and how these changes compare with surrounding areas.

From 1966 to 1968, Avery showed a larger percentage increase in sales than the region or state but less than Watauga County. With 16 percent growth in two years, Avery's retail sales increased 1.4 million dollars. This is a substantial increase, but there are still not enough retail establishments to provide services for the expected tourist as well as resident population increase.

#### Wholesale Trade

As shown by Table 21, the number of wholesale activities decreased from 7 to 4 from 1958 to 1963 in Avery County. In spite of this, total sales increased nearly 50 percent and payrolls 96 percent. It is doubtful if the wholesaling sector can experience any significant growth in Avery due to the fact that



most of such activity is centered in the surrounding large urban areas.

TABLE 21  
TRENDS IN WHOLESALE TRADES  
Avery County, W.N.C., N.C.  
1958-1963

|                                      | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 7       | 4       | -42.9    |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 1,598   | 2,374   | 48.6     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 93      | 182     | 95.7     |
| No. of Employees                     | 25      | 39      | 56.0     |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 3,720   | 4,667   | 25.5     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 228,286 | 593,500 | 160.0    |

| W.N.C. REGION                        | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 468     | 562     | 20.1     |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 262,434 | 276,556 | 5.4      |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 13,289  | 17,596  | 32.4     |
| No. of Employees                     | 3,783   | 4,233   |          |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 3,658   | 4,157   | 13.6     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 560,756 | 492,093 | -12.2    |

| NORTH CAROLINA                       | 1958      | 1963      | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 5,741     | 6,615     | 15.2     |
| Total Sales (\$000)                  | 5,025,891 | 6,982,616 | 38.9     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 211,304   | 323,297   | 53.0     |
| No. of Employees                     | 54,441    | 67,146    | 23.3     |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 3,881     | 4,815     | 24.1     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 875,438   | 1,055,573 | 20.6     |

Source: U.S. Census of Business, Wholesale Trade, 1958 and 1963.



## Selected Services

The selected services sector of the economy includes those activities in business and repair services, amusement, recreation, hotels and motels, motion pictures, and personal services such as laundries, beauty shops, etc. Table 22 gives data on these services for Avery County, the region and state. Although Avery had an increase in the number of establishments from 1958 to 1963, there was a 23 percent decrease in receipts as well as decreases in all other categories. The region showed a 49 percent increase in receipts and the state, 45 percent.

TABLE 22  
TRENDS IN SELECTED SERVICES  
Avery County, W.N.C., N.C.  
1958-1963

| AVERY COUNTY                         | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| No. of Establishments                | 33      | 45      | 36.4     |
| Receipts (\$000)                     | 749     | 578     | -22.8    |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 200     | 124     | -38.0    |
| Employees                            | 38      | 30      | -21.1    |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 5,263   | 4,133   | -21.5    |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 22,697  | 12,844  | -43.4    |
| W.N.C. REGION                        | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
| No. of Establishments                | 2,223   | 2,881   | 29.6     |
| Receipts (\$000)                     | 44,704  | 66,518  | 48.8     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 12,395  | 16,358  | 32.0     |
| Employees                            | 6,043   | 5,672   | -6.1     |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 2,051   | 2,884   | 40.6     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 20,110  | 23,088  | 14.8     |
| NORTH CAROLINA                       | 1958    | 1963    | % Change |
| No. of Establishments                | 18,430  | 23,677  | 28.5     |
| Receipts (\$000)                     | 413,512 | 597,730 | 44.5     |
| Payroll (\$000)                      | 113,553 | 155,363 | 36.8     |
| Employees                            | 52,186  | 56,554  | 8.4      |
| Average Annual Wages<br>per Employee | 2,176   | 2,747   | 26.2     |
| Average Sales per<br>Establishment   | 22,437  | 25,245  | 12.5     |

Source: U.S. Census of Business, Selected Services, 1958 and 1963.



Avery had 9 motels and hotels in 1963, 15 personal service establishments and 4 amusement and recreation services. The county is lacking in proper services of this nature and will only continue to hamper its tourist trade if it does not supply these, particularly hotels and motels. The type of tourist that Avery attracts-- those who stay for a season or more duration rather than passing through-- demand the same services as permanent residents.

#### Construction

Construction employment in Avery has grown 200 percent from 1962 to 1968. With a change from 20 to 60 employees, most of the increase came between 1967 and 1968.

The construction industry faces a good future in Avery as a result of the expected increase in the tourist business. New residents mean new homes, new stores, new churches, and other buildings.

#### Transportation, Communication and Public Utilities

Employment in the transportation, communication and public utilities sector has decreased in Avery from 1962 to 1968. The N.C. Employment Security Commission reports that 60 people were employed in providing these services in 1968. Nationally, employment is decreasing in this industry.

#### Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

Employment in Avery in the finance, insurance and real estate services increased by 10 persons from 1962 to 1968, with 50 employed in 1968. Metropolitan Asheville is the finance, insurance and real estate center of Western North Carolina and will become increasingly difficult with which to compete.

#### Government

Government activities employed 400 persons in Avery in 1968, an increase of 70 employees over 1962. Government is the largest employer in the service industries and plays an important role in the county's economy. Government employment as a percent of total employment decreased somewhat during the 1960's, indicating that other sectors are growing faster locally.



## Tourism

The Western North Carolina Region, and particularly Avery County, has great potential for tourist and recreation activities. Its unspoiled mountains, forests and waters, climate and folk culture are accessible to the large consumer markets of the Eastern and Midwestern United States. It is also within access of traffic flowing from the North to the resort areas of Florida and the South. It is estimated that at least 50 million people are within 18 hours travel time of the area. With the improvements that are beginning to take place in the region's transportation system-- particularly the opening of Interstate and Appalachian Highways-- the area is becoming even more accessible.

A study by Hammer, Greene, Siler and Associates, Investment Guidelines for the North Carolina Appalachian Region, 1967, has designated the counties of Avery, Mitchell, Watauga and Yancey as the Mountain Scenic Development Region. The rough terrain of this area has prevented adequate highway development and makes it the most isolated area of Appalachian North Carolina. As a consequence, agricultural and industrial development has occurred in the valleys, leaving the mountain peaks to be enjoyed for their natural beauty.

Avery County has within its bounds some of the top scenic attractions of the region. Among these are Grandfather Mountain, the Blue Ridge Parkway through the southern section, Linville Falls. It has gained the most desirable type of tourist trade -- the quality resort areas which attract long-term visitors rather than those just passing through. It has long been a haven for summer residents but with the development of such year-round resorts as Beech Mountain, Sugar Mountain, Land Harbors, Grandfather Golf and Country Club, Invershield and Seven Devils, it is becoming a winter sports area also.



Avery offers a wide range of recreational activities. Four golf courses are in operation with several others in the planning stages. Numerous trout streams exist as a consequence of the presence of Toe River, Linville River, Johns' River, Watauga River and their tributaries. The many man-made recreational developments offer a variety of activities plus building sites for vacation homes. Following is a listing of the major attractions and the facilities which they offer:

1. Beech Mountain. This development offers in addition to housing, entertainment for children in the Land of Oz, skiing and ski instruction, golf, skeet shooting, horseback riding, tennis, swimming and an air strip for small planes. Plans for the future include 4,000 homes, motels, shops and other services to sustain the population at their many vacation residences.
2. Grandfather Golf & Country Club. This development offers golf, housing, swimming and related activities. Plans for the future include 500 homes by 1990.
3. Seven Devils. This development is located in Avery and Watauga Counties and offers home sites, skiing, golf, swimming and other related activities.
4. Land Harbors. This 900-acre tract is being developed mainly for camping and will provide activities to accompany such as golfing, hiking, archery, canoeing and sailing on a 70-acre lake, trout streams, shopping and swimming. Lots, were available for sale in 1969 and can be managed and rented by Carolina Caribbean Corporation, thus affording income for owners.
5. Sugar Mountain. This is primarily a ski resort offering summer-time swimming, trails, and other activities. At present no homes are complete but there are plans for 700 by 1990.



6. Grandfather Mountain. This is one of the oldest mountains on earth and its 5,000 acre recreation area offers the scenic view from the mile high swinging bridge, camp sites, picnic areas, hiking trails and caves.
7. Blue Ridge Parkway. In addition to the scenic beauty offered by a drive through America's most popular national park, it offers National Park Service maintained camping areas near Linville Falls, trails and picnic sites.
8. Linville Falls. These water falls offer natural beauty, hiking trails and picnic areas.
9. Invershield. This area is in the developing stages and will offer homesites, shopping, horseback riding.

In addition, there are several private camping areas. The Daniel Boone Wildlife Management Area, located in the Pisgah National Forest, provides public hunting and fishing and draws outside sportsmen in considerable numbers. The Pisgah National Forest has several nearby public camping areas but none in Avery County.

#### Income From the Travel Business

According to the N.C. Travel and Promotion Division and the N.C. Travel Council, in 1968, a total of \$935,000 dollars in income came into Avery as a result of the tourist trade -- \$665,000 of this coming from out-of-state visitors. Travel related expenditures were up 78 percent in 1968 over 1958 and the amount of out-of-state expenditures increased by 88 percent. Total sales in all travel-related businesses including local customers showed a 96 percent increase from 1958 to 1968 in the county.

Undoubtedly, Watauga County receives retail sales from Avery, primarily in Boone. If the proper services and shopping facilities could be maintained, Avery could retain some of these expenditures. It is projected that income from the travel business in Avery will increase at a faster pace during the next few years.



### Travel-Related Employment

In 1968, all travel expenditures created jobs for 47,000 persons in North Carolina. The number employed in travel-related businesses in Avery in 1968 was 260 persons, an increase of 55 percent over 1958. This was a larger percentage increase than the state's 43 percent.

Avery had 79 firms engaged in serving the traveling public in 1968. This was a 98 percent increase in the number of firms since 1958. This is a much higher percentage increase than any of the other comparison areas, including the state and region.

Avery County has great potential for development of its tourist industry, and with the proper planning and controls, the county can develop into a quality resort area where the tranquility of the mountains can be enjoyed.



## ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

### INTRODUCTION

This section of the Avery County Economic Potential Study will be devoted to the examination of ways in which Avery's economic base can be strengthened. The goals and means of reaching them presented in this section are based on the previous basic data presented in the Population and Economic portions of this study.

Avery County's greatest potentials during the next two decades, in order of importance, are tourism, industry, and agriculture.



## POPULATION

### Summary

1. Avery County has experienced an overall population increase of 1,674 persons from 1920 to 1960; however, since 1940, the population has declined until the present when an upward trend is beginning to be noted.
2. This decline since 1940 is in contrast to population trends of the state and nation and has been brought about by the rural to urban migration. This rural to urban trend is expected to continue in the county as well as the state and nation.
3. Avery has lost persons in the young productive age groups as a result of the lack of employment opportunities.
4. Avery County has a small proportion of black people, and the number has declined since 1960 mainly as a result of the lack of employment for blacks.
5. In spite of decline in the total county population, the towns of Banner Elk, Crossnore and Linville and the townships in which they are located have experienced a steady population increase since 1920. This again is a result of rural to urban migration.
6. The county and the Towns of Newland, Banner Elk, Crossnore and Elk Park are expected to increase in population with Newland and Banner Elk receiving the greatest number of inhabitants.
7. Roaring Creek and Toe River Townships are expected to decline in population; Wilsons Creek Township is predicted to remain practically the same. All others will show a moderate population increase.



## Potentials for Growth

1. Avery County residents must not be resigned to the notion that its young, most productive people cannot be kept at home.
2. Every effort should be made by local citizens not only to capitalize on every economic opportunity but to seek and work diligently for new ones in order to provide employment and services for its best educated and skilled citizens so they will remain in the county.
3. The worsening condition of rural county housing which came as a result of migration from the farms could be helped by adoption and enforcement of a housing code and the construction of public housing for low-income families. Cooperation in the regional Avery, Mitchell, Yancey Housing Authority should be encouraged.

## TOURISM

### Summary

1. The tourist and recreation industry is beginning to be an important element in Avery County's economy.
2. Avery has some of North Carolina's top scenic attractions within its boundaries, such as Grandfather Mountain, Blue Ridge Parkway, Linville Falls, and approximately 126,200 acres of forested land to be enjoyed for many activities as well as for its natural beauty.
3. Most of Avery's recreational complexes are private, commercial enterprises, and there are many recreation opportunities available in the National Forest's 21,000 acres, the area's trout streams, camping and picnic areas. Avery is one of ten counties in the state that holds title to recreation and park property. This land is presently unused, thus every encouragement should be given to its development.



5. The type of tourist trade that is developing in Avery is the most desirable type to have. The existing and proposed developments cater to the long-term visitor who stays for a complete season or more rather than merely passing through. Most developments appeal to families as they provide activities for all ages. Building sites are available so that homes are accessible to the owners at their discretion for summer or winter-time use and activities.
6. Avery has served summer-time visitors for some time now but has recently begun to develop into a winter resort area with the construction of ski slopes.

#### Potentials for Growth

1. The tourist and recreation industry is Avery's greatest potential for economic development if it continues in the same direction in which it is now headed. There must be other economic enterprises but a delicate balance between them, particularly manufacturing, must be maintained.
2. The major portion of travel-related businesses are service firms which are not adoptable to automation, thus do not require highly skilled or educated workers. Therefore, this business has excellent opportunities for new jobs for the relatively unskilled, the unemployed and underemployed worker.
3. Tourism is an industry that will continue to grow as the society grows more affluent, more mobile and has more leisure time to spend. Tourism brings in outside money the same as manufacturing since the services performed are sold to persons from outside the local area. It also serves to increase the tax base, particularly in Avery's case because of the many seasonal homes, and enables the county to provide adequate public services and facilities. The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, states that



demands on outdoor recreation facilities are exceeding previous expectations by wide margins. By the year 2,000, participation in summer-time outdoor recreation will be 4 times as great as 1960.

4. Tourism should be promoted and private and public sectors co-ordinated through a County Recreation Commission. Avery County established such a commission in 1968, but most of their activities are still in the planning stages. Their plans include a county recreation survey and development of more public recreational facilities, particularly for youth. This commission should be encouraged to be very active because it can provide the planning and controls which are necessary for the proper development of Avery County's recreational potential. Because of Avery's size, the commission should be a joint effort among the county and towns within the county. This would enable the planning, acquisition and operation of recreational facilities under one organization and leadership. Further information and assistance can be obtained from the N.C. Department of Local Affairs, Recreation Division, 902 Northwestern Bank, Asheville, N. C., 28801. This agency supplies assistance upon request.
5. Grants for both public and private recreational facilities are available from many sources in the federal government. Many must be applied for through state government; therefore, the N.C. Recreation Division mentioned above can again be of assistance upon request. Funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission can also be obtained in addition to federal grants for some projects which will bring total assistance up to 80 percent of cost.
6. Public information and advertising of the area's amenities and activities should be maintained and improved continuously.
7. Persons serving the traveling public should be trained in ways of providing the best services. Perhaps a tourist trades course could be incorporated into a technical



school -- another need within the area.

8. A fairly large lake would be a desirable addition to the area so that more water based activities could be added.
9. Land owners should not be afraid to try new enterprises and should be encouraged to offer tracts of land for sale to developers.
10. A zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations have been prepared for the county and will guide the orderly development of land once they are adopted by the county commissioners.
11. A land potential study is being prepared in conjunction with this study and will indicate physical liabilities and assets of the county.
12. The physical appearance of an area influences a visitor's attitude toward that area. Every effort should be made to keep the county and its business districts free from litter, junk yards and view-obstructing billboards.
13. Following is a listing by the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the summer-time activities predicted to be the fastest growing between now and 1980, in order of growth: 1) water-skiing, 2) camping, 3) hiking 4) swimming, 5) outdoor games and sports 6) outdoor concerts and plays.
14. Following is a listing of other suggested activities which would be desirable to promote in connection with Avery's tourist industry: 1) golf tournaments, 2) ski tournaments, 3) outdoor concerts and plays, 4) night-time entertainment, 5) art and handicraft shows 6) private hunting preserves, 7) live-on farms 8) health resorts.



## INDUSTRY

### Summary

1. The manufacturing industry is Avery County's largest single employer, providing 890 jobs in 1968.
2. Manufacturing employment has more than doubled since 1962 in the county. This is a substantially higher rate of increase than the state and nation.
3. The major manufacturing employers in the county are the textile and apparel industries, employing 850 persons in 1967. There are two such firms and are located at Banner Elk and Newland.
4. The printing and stone, clay and glass industries are Avery's second largest manufacturing employers, with 155 employees in 1967, a gain of 25 since 1962. The stone, clay and glass industry accounts for most of these employees and includes the mining and processing of kaolin, mica, feldspar and vermiculite found in the county. Avery has three such firms which have the bulk of activity in mica processing.
5. The lumber and wood industry employed 20 persons in 1967, a decline of 60% from 1962.
6. Manufacturing wages in Avery County are below those of the state. In 1968, the average weekly wage covered by compensation insurance by the N.C. Employment Security Commission was \$74.16 in Avery and \$106.37 in the state. This is a result of the low-paying textile and apparel industries being the predominant employers.
7. As of June, 1969, a total of 635 experienced manufacturing workers in Avery and the 6 neighboring counties were available for jobs. Of these, 170 were males and 465 females. A total of 365 males and 1,010 females which were inexperienced but trainable was also recruitable from this same area.



## Potentials for Growth

1. Nationally, an increase in apparel sales is expected in the next decade as a result of a more affluent society and the expected growth of the young consumer age groups. However, low-cost textile imports have more than doubled in the past decade while exports have only increased by one-fifth, thus causing a low earnings per dollar of sales. This, plus expected increased in all manufacturing costs, will not permit a large increase in profits in spite of the expected increase in sales. As evidenced by the rapid growth of research in textiles and apparels, these industries are aware that new products and better manufacturing techniques must be devised to meet the challenge of low-cost imports. Therefore, as a result of the national outlook and characteristics of textiles and apparels and because these are practically the only manufacturing industries Avery has, the county should diligently seek other types of manufacturing firms. Although the tourist industry remains Avery's greatest potential for economic development, it cannot support a healthy economy alone.
2. The lumber and wood industry should never become large here but there are possibilities to utilize the timber resources on a small scale that could employ more people-- for example, growing locust trees and producing fence posts or handicraft furniture and other wood crafts would find a readily available market from tourists. The skills for crafts are already present and although such enterprises would be small, nevertheless, they would reduce the unemployment rolls. Quality craft products could gain a nationwide market if the potential were better developed.
3. The stone, clay and glass industry could be greatly expanded to completely process mica and kaolin from



raw material to finished product. Mica products are used in such industries as electronics, the manufacture of wallpaper, rubber, paint, decorative plaster and others. Kaolin is used in making of dinnerware and ceramics. The manufacturing of industrial ceramics is a fairly new industry and a good one to promote. Feldspar is used in the production of glass, china, ceramic fixtures and cleaning powders.

4. Other industries should be sought but they should be of the type which would not spoil Avery's natural beauty by air and water pollution, noise, unsightly appearance and other undesirable characteristics, or exploit its natural resources on a large scale, such as timber in the manufacture of pulp and paper. Also, types that do not require the mass transit of large, bulk raw materials or finished products are better suited because of Avery's limited highway transportation system and lack of railroad service. The nearest rail service which Avery utilizes is at nearby Spruce Pine in Mitchell County.
5. Such industries as electrical machinery, and the expansion of the stone, clay and glass industry are ideal for maintaining the harmony that must exist between industry and tourism. These industries employ skilled and semi-skilled persons and have average or above-average wage rates. They will likely bring about an immigration of the better educated from outside the area as well as provide a source of employment for the highly skilled local people, particularly males.
6. An area in which the population has a low level of educational attainment generally attracts industries which employ unskilled labor at low wages. In order to successfully compete for modern, high-quality industry, the educational level of the labor force must be equal or superior to competing areas.



7. Industries locating in Western North Carolina have found that local people are easily trained for skilled jobs because of their natural heritage of work in handicrafts, farming, and other dexterous trades. The skills needed for the particular industries sought should be determined and training for them incorporated into a technical training center for the area. The greatest incentive for industry to locate in an area is a skilled labor force.
8. Manufacturing employment will not increase greatly in the future if Avery County's present manufacturing base is not diversified. Too much dependence is being placed on the textile and apparel industries. Other types of industries would bring about wage competition, therefore, better wages for textile's own protection. The future of this sector will depend upon whether Avery can attract desirable, well paying industries requiring skilled and semi-skilled labor that can be trained locally.

#### TRADES AND SERVICES

##### Summary

1. Retail sales have grown at a slightly better pace in Avery than in the state in recent years. Payrolls from retail sales in Avery have increased at a much greater rate than for the state.
2. The number of wholesale firms has decreased recently in Avery, but there has been an increase in payrolls and sales.
3. From 1958 to 1963, Avery County showed a decrease in receipts and payrolls from selected services.



## Potentials for Growth

1. A survey of developers and others interested in the economic development of Avery County indicates that there is not enough retail establishments such as food stores, restaurants, clothing and specialty stores in Avery to serve present needs not to mention future demands for more services. This is true particularly in the Banner Elk area where many consumers travel to Boone even for grocery shopping. In 1963, the county had only 9 eating and drinking places and only 1 apparel and accessory store. The type of visitor Avery attracts must be provided with adequate services if Avery is to reach its potential as a resort area.
2. Consolidated shopping center areas offering a variety of services would be more beneficial to Avery County than scattered commercial services.
3. Good quality restaurants and motels are needed to cater to the visiting populace. Restaurants should serve Southern or regional foods, develop a specialty, and acquire a unique style of building and theme throughout in keeping with mountain or country life. They should also develop quality food and service because the type of tourist attracted in Avery is there for a season or more duration and will be back for a repeat performance. A nationally franchised food or lodging business would have the benefit of their nationwide advertising.
4. Employees serving the traveling customer should be trained to provide a high level of service.

## AGRICULTURE

### Summary

1. Agriculture has long been and still is Avery's major source of income.



2. Due to the national decline in the relative importance of agriculture and because Avery's topography prohibits large-scale farm consolidation, only a few Avery residents can rely wholly on farming as a livelihood.
3. Of Avery's 301 commercial farms in 1964, 210 sold less than \$2,500 in products, and a total 734 farms, 433 were classified as part-time or part-retirement. This indicates that the majority of farming in Avery is marginal with most small farmers having some other source of income.
4. In 1960, the median farm family income in Avery County was a low \$2,171, but increased productivity and sales show that it has improved since then.
5. Farming has changed rapidly in recent years in Avery County. The value of crops sold in Avery has increased in the last few years while the value of livestock and poultry has declined.
6. Income from ornamental trees and shrubs, christmas trees and other evergreen decorations was \$1,683,042 in 1968 in Avery, making this by far Avery's biggest money crop. A forestry facility was recently established on the Linville River near Crossnore. This is a forest tree nursery for raising mountain hardwoods for reforestation as well as fir seedlings for the christmas tree industry. The next largest money crop was outdoor flowers with an income of \$379,008. The other major money producers were cabbage at \$157,290, tobacco producing \$150,612, and lumber at \$147,600. The flower, nursery and greenhouse business has begun to increase productivity in Avery.

#### Potentials for Growth

1. Agriculture in Avery County can never be as economically rewarding as the average farm for the nation, but, nevertheless, holds many possibilities and income for a good number of residents who are not afraid to try new crops



and new ideas.

2. It is recommended highly by agricultural specialists that farmers concentrate on quality, small-scale field and specialty crops in Avery County. Crops such as ornamentals and nursery products should be encouraged because they lend natural beauty to the scenic nature and tourist locations in the county. Recently agricultural research has discovered that Avery's climate has growing conditions ideally suited to the production of mushrooms. Although Avery's terrain limits the amount of pastureland, the production of beef and dairy cattle could be profitable for a number of persons. Another possibility for employment of a few people would be the raising of horses for riding stables in connection with the tourist industry. In this capacity also is the possibility of turning farms into live-on farms for tourists. Idle farm lands could be utilized as mountain health resorts and private hunting preserves.
3. These crops would replace marginal farming efforts so that higher incomes could be obtained from current farming efforts.
4. The timber resources of Avery County hold income producing potential for some people. Approximately 80 percent of the county is in forests from which an income of \$163,000 was derived in 1968. Hardwoods can be sold to the furniture industries; however, care should be exercised in reforestation and not over-exploiting the resources of the forests which are so valuable for their natural beauty to the tourist industry.



